THE AMERICAN LEGION POST 175
MECHANICSVILLE, VIRGINIA

POST HANDBOOK
FY 2026-2027

WWW.POST175.ORG

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Our Post

Welcome and Congratulations on your membership in The American Legion and our Post. You now belong to our Legion Family of nearly 3 million members! The American Legion is a powerful force in our nation. We hope your involvement will be a rewarding experience.

The American Legion began in 1919. It is the nation's largest and most influential Veterans Service Organization (VSO). All our American Legion Family, from The American Legion, The American Legion Auxiliary (ALA), The Sons of the American Legion (SAL) and The American Legion Riders (ALR) work together as patriotic Americans to serve America and her veterans.

Since our very first meeting in March 1919, in Paris, France, The American Legion has maintained a vision for a Strong America. **Our Four Pillars of service are: *Veteran Affairs & Rehabilitation, Children & Youth, National Security, and Americanism.***

Under the **Four Pillars** are programs that support the foundation of The American Legion. They are as follows:

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

- VA Claims Backlog
- Access to VA Health Care
- Network of Service Officers
- GI Bill Benefits
- VA Vet Centers
- Health-care Funding Formula
- Veterans with Special Needs
- Volunteering
- Final Respects
- Heroes to Hometowns
- Careers for Veterans
- Homelessness

Children & Youth

Child Pornography
Catastrophic Illness
Intellectual Disabilities
Family Integrity
Immunization
Media Violence
Drug Abuse
Child Sex Exploitation
Family Support Network
Temporary Financial Assistance
Child Welfare Foundation
Samsung Scholarship

National Security

- Support for the Troops
- Size of the Armed Forces
- Quality of Life
- Homeland Security
- POW/MIAs
- Operation Comfort Warriors

Americanism

Veterans in the Classroom
Illegal Immigration
Get Out the Vote
Scouts
Citizen's Flag Alliance
Boys State
American Legion Baseball
High School Oratorical Contest

To the extent you are able, we hope you find ways to contribute to the proud future of Post 175. Our Post's future will be defined by our service to local veterans, their families, county communities, Virginia and our great Nation. The future of our Post will be stronger and more rewarding because of your involvement.

As you become more involved in Post 175, you may have questions about The American Legion or our Post. Just bring your questions to a Post officer, we will do our best to help you. If we cannot provide answers for you, your Chain of Command is as follows: Post Commander, 13th District Commander, Department Vice Commander, Department Commander.

Post Meetings

Coffee and Doughnuts Social: Tuesday mornings from 9:00 am to 11:00 am
Executive Committee (ExCom): 2nd Tuesday of every month, 7:00 pm
Pot Luck Dinner: 2nd Wednesday of every month, 6:00 pm
General Membership Meeting: 4th Tuesday of every month, 7:00 pm
Community Breakfast (Public Invited): Last Saturday of a month, 7:30 am to 10:00 am
(Except November and December)

Short History

The American Legion Post 175 was first organized by sixteen Veterans on September 27, 1945. The Post was granted its Permanent Charter in April 1946. The 16 founding members were: R.B. Bullock; C.H. Hall; B.A. Humphries; C.R. Jenkins; W.F. Knox; C.D. Mayer; J.G. Payne; H.G. Puller; Joseph Rotella; B.I. Rowe; L. Hampton Stewart; B.T. Talley; Lloyd L. Traylor; Harold Warren; W.F. West; and E. Ray Winters.

What Makes this Post Unique

The American Legion Post 175, initially formed by a group of sixteen Veterans in 1945, has served the local and "extended" community for over 80 years! The Post began in a nice little house across the street from the Mechanicsville Recreation Building (its first

Post home). The Post later moved to a small house on Route 301, next to the Timberlake Realty Company. It later moved to the 'back room' of Johnson's Grocery Store on Atlee Road in 1978, where it remained until the dedication of its current home at 8700 Bell Creek Road in Mechanicsville, Virginia on October 21, 2011.

The current Post Home is also home for the following affiliated organizations: The American Legion Auxiliary (ALA); The Sons of the American Legion (SAL); and The American Legion Riders (ALR).

The American Legion Post 175 also sponsors and/or supports the following organizations and units: all Hanover County, Virginia Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) units, Scouting America Troop 553, and the Hanover County Veterans Committee.

Post 175 is over 300 Legionnaires strong and growing. Our Post is an integral part of the greater Hanover County community and a proud advocate for veterans on the local, state, and national level. Our local membership extends throughout the county and beyond.

Legion Uniform: What is the official uniform of The American Legion?
"A Legionnaire is in uniform if wearing an official American Legion Cap."

Why wear your Legion Uniform in public? Legionnaires like us, seen in uniform doing the good work of The American Legion creates a positive image. This helps our community "see" The American Legion as an organization they want to support. It is a very important element of our public relations and marketing efforts.

There is no benefit to Legionnaires being invisible to the public as we do the good work of The Legion, so please identify yourself to the community as a proud member of The American Legion by wearing your uniform cap.

Legion Language and Protocols

New Legionnaires often find the following information helpful:

- MEETING CONDUCT: Robert's Rules of Order (Revised), governs the conduct of Post meetings and parliamentary procedure.
- CEREMONY DIGNITY: The ceremonial services of The American Legion are conducted with solemnity befitting the dignity of this organization.

- POW/MIA EMPTY CHAIR: “A POW/MIA empty chair is placed at all official meetings of The American Legion as a physical symbol of the thousands of American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for from all wars and conflicts involving the United States of America."
- GAVEL: A Chair’s gavel is a symbol of authority & ensures orderly meetings.
    - One tap is a message to the members:
      To be seated following the opening ceremony
      The completion of a business item, or
      Following the announcement of adjournment
    - Two taps of the gavel call the meeting to order.
    - Three taps of the gavel are the signal for members to stand on the third tap.
    - A series of sharp taps is used to restore order at a meeting.
- SILENT TRIBUTE: Legionnaires standing in silent tribute in memory of departed comrades during meetings or ceremonies will face the U.S. Flag with Legion cap or hand held over their heart.
- PUFL: Stands for Paid-Up-For-Life membership.
- TRANSFERRED TO POST EVERLASTING: Refers to a Legionnaire who has died and transferred to the Post Everlasting.

Our Post Family

Post 175, as the parent organization, has three other important units in our local Legion family. They are:

<u>The American Legion Auxiliary (ALA), Unit 175</u>

Founded in 1919, The American Legion Auxiliary is the oldest member of the Legion Family of units and the most independent. The Auxiliary is a separate organization with their own legal and corporate identity.

Every Spring, the Friday before Memorial Day, the Auxiliary promotes the red poppy as a symbol of the sacrifices our military have made, a symbol to open people’s hearts and inspire them to donate to support the future of veterans, active-duty military personnel and their families with medical and financial needs.

Meeting: The 4th Tuesday of every month (same as the Post)

<u>The Sons of The American Legion (SAL), Squadron 175</u>

Founded in 1932, the Sons of The American Legion (SAL) squadron consists of boys and men of all ages whose grandparents or parents served in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Meeting: Last Saturday of a month (after the Community Breakfast)

The American Legion Riders (ALR), Chapter 175

The American Legion Riders (ALR) are Legionnaires, who are also motorcycle enthusiasts. They all belong to The Legion, The Legion Auxiliary or The Sons of the American Legion. Legion Riders are well known for raising scholarship funds for children of Post 9/11 Veterans. They also support the Veterans and Children's Foundation.

Meeting: Last Saturday of a month (after the Community Breakfast)

Post Programs

Our post offers many outstanding programs that serve our community, veterans and youth. The Sons of the American Legion (SAL) and The American Legion Riders (ALR) are both programs (committees) of the Post, that operate as subordinate units with their own leadership.

Training

Effective training is important to the success of our Legion. Quality training improves our ability to succeed by improving member involvement and operational performance. Training also helps teach organizational values and identify future Post leaders. Conversely, the lack of effective training can lead to losing our focus on success and can limit our operational performance.

Many who accept leadership roles in The American Legion are often self-motivated by a desire to serve others and seek out training because they want to become stronger, better-informed leaders.

Select the "Legion College" link under "Programs" on the Department website (www.valegion.org) to access Leadership, Education and Development (LEAD) classes.

"This is The American Legion" is an excellent short video every member of our Legion Family should watch. This video is available on

YouTube, at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfIQaYvsB8c&t=17s

BASIC TRAINING – Focuses on the Four Pillars and programs of The American Legion for officers and members. **To take the course, visit https://www.legion.org/alei**.

VIRGINIA LEGION COLLEGE – Expands on the material covered in Basic Training. Information link: https://valegion.org/programs/leadership-college

NATIONAL LEGION COLLEGE - The American Legion National College enhances knowledge and appreciation of The American Legion. It teaches the core values and contributions of the organization, its Auxiliary, The Sons of the American Legion and many subordinate programs.

LEGION PUBLICATIONS - Legion publications can be an excellent training resource for those who are self-motivated. The Publications page of The American Legion website is a good place to find most of them. Here are a few key publications many find helpful. Link: https://www.legion.org/publications

- **Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies**
- Post Operations Manual and Post Building Guide
- The American Legion Positions and Programs
- The American Legion Membership Public Relations Guide
- Why You Should Belong

Member Information (MyLegion.org)

Accurate and up-to-date member information is important for any organization. We are very fortunate in The American Legion that every member can take an active role in keeping their information accurate and up-to-date, using the MyLegion.org members-only web portal.

This requires a Member Account be established in MyLegion.org. To establish the member account, visit the home page of The American Legion web site (Legion.org) and click on the MYLEGION.ORG link at the very top of the home page.

Once your personal Member Account is established in MyLegion.org, select the "MY PROFILE" option to update your information or print a copy of your membership card.

In addition to updating your personal profile information you can also:
- Subscribe to electronic newsletters
- View past editions of the Legion Magazine
- Make donations in the "Giving Made Easy" option
- Find out about special offers available to Legionnaires, and
- Select dues renewal options

In the dues Renewal Options, we highly recommend the automatic payment option for annual dues. It is an easy and smart way to ensure dues are paid by October 20, per Article V Section 4 of the National Constitution.

Post Governance

Good Post governance is an essential duty of Post leaders, and it includes a variety of elements. It is realized in the long-term success of our Post.

Executive Committee (ExCom): The day-to-day administration, governance and management of our Post is entrusted to the Executive Committee. In our Post, the Executive Committee members are all elected and appointed officers of the Post. (Commander, Vice Commanders, Adjutant, Buildings and Grounds, Chaplain, Finance Officer, Judge Advocate, Sergeant-at-Arms, Service Officer, and up to five (5) At-Large members.)

Vision of Success: Our Post excels in service to fellow veterans, their families, and our community, while consistently operating as a model of quality Post operations.

Key Post Goals:
- Sustained membership growth
- Financial solvency and stability
- Excellent leadership development
- Successful programs
- Quality service to veterans, their families and community

Mission Statement: “Our Post exists to support fellow veterans, their families, and our community.”

Constitution and Bylaws: The Constitution and Bylaws are the two most important documents in our Post operation. They define the responsibilities of all Post Officers and they are available from the Post Adjutant or from our Post website. (www.Post175.org)

Our Post Constitution and Bylaws may not conflict with, and are subordinate to, the 13th District Constitution and Bylaws, Department of Virginia Constitution and Bylaws and National Constitution and Bylaws.

Post Leadership

In The American Legion and our Post, leadership is provided by members such as yourself. Post leaders are fundamentally responsible for the success of our Post. These Legionnaires serve in many different capacities, as Post officers, committee members, chairmen and mentors. Good Post leaders have the initiative and commitment necessary to provide honorable and noteworthy service to our veterans, their families and the communities we serve.

Members interested in potential leadership roles must be dedicated to increasing their knowledge of The American Legion policy and procedure. Communicating this information and that dispersed by the Department staff is critical to an effective Post. Members at every level of the Department of Virginia are here to assist in your progression, as the need arises.

Attendance at our District Conferences and Convention, Department Mid-Winter Conference and the Department Convention will also assist in your growth. At each of these gatherings, District and Department leaders will disseminate valuable information and provide an opportunity for your inquiries.

No Partisan Politics

The American Legion is a **501(c)(19) non-profit corporation** and is **absolutely non-partisan**. “Policies, Not Partisan Politics” is our guiding principle.

Summary of Post Leader Duties

Post leaders are responsible for the Post’s success. Our Post Constitution and Bylaws are the ultimate reference on Post leader duties. The following descriptions are intended as a generic overview of what many consider key responsibilities of Post leaders.

The Post Commander, Adjutant, Service Officer, First Vice Commander and Finance Officer are “required” officers on the annual Post Officer Certification Form. This is one of three forms our Post must submit each year, to maintain our Charter.

Post Commander (Elected): The Commander ensures the Post's vision of success is completed and keeps the Post family together in the process. The Post Commander traditionally serves as the President of the Board of Directors for incorporated posts. The Post Commander is also the voice of the Post, within the Post and at meetings beyond the Post. Post Commanders also work with and through other leaders to complete the Post business, as they cultivate and guide them for future leadership roles.

Adjutant (Elected): Whether seen as a Post ‘First Sergeant’ or a Continuity Officer, the Adjutant’s role is critical in the long-term success of our Post. Adjutants are responsible for keeping official records of our Post business, minutes of meetings, processing membership and coordinating with the Post’s various committees.

First Vice-Commander (Elected) The First Vice Commander fulfills the duties of the Post Commander in their absence. The First Vice Commander is primarily concerned with membership. In too many posts, the First Vice Commander serves as a Membership Committee of one. A Post, even a small Post, should have Recruitment, Renewal, and Reconnect Committees to help with recruitment, transferring members from department administrative Posts, member renewals, member retention and with ensuring the Post routinely has personal (by phone, in person or electronically) contact, with every member of the Post. A Membership Committee of three (or more), is far more effective than the committee of just one.

Second Vice-Commander (Elected): In our Post the Second Vice Commander is the designated liaison to the community regarding building rentals and oversees Post morale to include entertainment and ceremonial programs, and other duties as directed by the Post.

Finance Officer (Elected): Much of the Post Finance Officer's work is defined and determined by standard accounting practices and the needs of the Post. The Post Finance Officer is the person of integrity that helps develop a Post budget and administers the Post book of accounts. Finance Officers also advise Post leaders on the formulating and administering of financial policies, including the annual Post budget.

Post Veterans Service Officer (VSO) (Appointed): Shall educate the Post on veteran’s benefits and assist in gathering information for the Department Veterans Service Officer (VSO). The VSO also helps train other VSO’s.

Sergeant-at-Arms (Elected): Shall preserve order at all meetings, ensures members are properly greeted at the door, makes new members welcome, and oversees flag etiquette/disposal, and shall perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Post.

Executive Committee (ExCom) Members: The Executive Committee Members are advocates for the general membership, assist Post officers in directing Post business and act as Post representatives in the absence of Post officers.

Post Operating Committees

To help advise the Commander and Executive Committee (ExCom) the Post may establish and define the work of Post committees.

Through work on committees, our members provide the hard work needed for our Post's success as they plan, organize, communicate and implement the programs of our Post and The American Legion.

The Post Operating Committees are critical to increasing active membership. Committees within our Post create a forum for members to pursue personal interests. They allow for the strengths and dedication of our members to shine. Post members, like you, serving on committees can grow as productive Post members and leaders. Committee work also functions as a very important training ground to develop the leadership skills and knowledge of The Legion future Post leaders need to succeed.

Committee Descriptions

Americanism Committee and Sub-Committees: Seek to inspire love of country and good citizenship through patriotic observances, flag etiquette, civic instruction in schools, community service, and youth activities such as Boys State, Scouts, Oratorical Contest, Middle School Essay Contest, Flag Education and School Award Medal Program.

Buildings and Grounds Committee: Handles the operation and upkeep of our Post facility.

Communications and Media Committee: Responsible for website maintenance, Post newsletter, and communications with Post membership as well as local and national press.

Finance Committee: Supervises the financial duties of the Post, prepares the annual budget, conducts audits when necessary, and advises the Executive Committee (ExCom) on financial matters. Guidance is provided by the Post Finance Officer.

Membership Committee: Has charge of all matters pertaining to membership, eligibility, growth, acceptance, retention, and renewals. Guidance is provided by the First Vice Commander, who is the Chair of the Committee.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA&R) Committee: Responsible for bringing to the attention of members and their dependents the rights and benefits granted them by law. They shall visit comrades who are sick or disabled; visit and comfort members of families of the sick or bereaved. Guidance is provided by the Post Chaplain and Post Veterans Service Officer (VSO).

As a small Post, we have committees that our membership numbers can support. In addition to the aforementioned committees, several others may used to support our Four Pillars.

Across the Department of Virginia, you may see Posts with a: National Security Committee, Legislative Committee, Veterans Employment and Education Committee, and Internal Affairs Committee.

Fundraisers

Our Post has several, diverse fundraisers during the year. Our Legion Family, and friends of Post 175, give their financial support to these important events to help fund and/or support Post programs.

Some of these events are / have been:

- Bake Sales
- Baskets of Cheer Raffles
- Brunswick Stew Sales
- Community Breakfasts
- Direct Solicitations
- Food Bank Donations
- Friday Fish Fry
- Gun Raffles
- Poppy Distribution
- Toys for Tots
- Quilt Raffles
- And more

The Preamble of The American Legion Constitution

We recite the Preamble before each meeting, as it is the written essence of who we are.

For God and Country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes:
To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America;
To maintain law and order;
To foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism;
To preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in all Wars;
To inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation;
To combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses;
To make right the master of might;
To promote peace and goodwill on earth;
To safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy;
To consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

Post 175 Contact Information

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